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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC, KMDR, KPAO, GM

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAN CIA LEBANON THAILAND;BERLIN

- A. Lead Stories Summary
- B. (UN) Iranian Nuclear Program
- C. (GWOT) CIA Renditions
- D. (Mideast) Lebanon Mission
- E. (Thailand) Military Coup

- A. Lead Stories Summary

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HEADLINES

Bundestag Approves Lebanon Mission (Frankfurter Allgemeine)

Health Reform At Risk (Süddeutsche Zeitung)

Emergency Plans For Health Reform (Die Welt)

Merkel Shuns Health Plans (Frankfurter Rundschau)

Bundestag Sends German Soldiers To Mideast (Tagesspiegel)

Merkel Wants More Money For Military (Berliner Zeitung)

Editorials focused on the Lebanon mission. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with reports on the Bundestag's approval of the German mandate for the international mission to Lebanon.

B. (UN) Iranian Nuclear Program

1. "Clever"

Wolfgang Ginter Lerch commented in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (9/21):

"You may think about the Iranian President Ahmadinejad whatever you wish, but he enjoys a better reputation among those who share his views than Colonel Qadhafi did in his best times. Ahmadinejad's recent performance at the UN General Assembly did not produce any news. At a time when Secretary General Annan says good-bye, the powers that founded the UN and many countries in the non-Western world are deeply divided. The Iranian leader was clever enough to capitalize on this."

2. "The Strategy Of Noyes"

Business daily Financial Times Deutschland of Hamburg (9/21) editorialized:

"The clear line the UN Security Council set in the nuclear dispute, by demanding from Iran that it suspend uranium enrichment, is hardly visible anymore. Tehran ignored the resolution, and Ahmadinejad frankly admitted in New York that the Security Council has no legitimacy for him. The U.S. expectation that Iran would automatically be taken to account by the international community was not met. Ahmadinejad did not just make new friends in Cuba and Venezuela, Iran also again succeeded in destroying the notoriously weak unity between the U.S., Europe, Russia, and China, which would

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have to agree on sanctions at the end."

3. "Litmus Test"

Andreas Rinke remarked in business daily Handelsblatt of D|sseldorf (9/21):

"The dispute over the nuclear program is becoming a litmus test of the UN. Only after the General Assembly has met will we clearly see whether the Iranians want to gamble for more time or whether they seriously seek a compromise. If not, the UN Security Council must take action in order not to risk losing its credibility. The work

of the UN has become difficult because the P5 delayed the reform of the organization's structure. Above all, Iranian President Ahmadinejad touches on this sore point by referring to the out-dated composition of the Security Council. Part of the credibility and effectiveness of the UN is that it is being viewed as representative of international community."

C. (GWOT) CIA Renditions

1. "Freedom For The CIA"

Hans Leyendecker remarked in center-left S|ddeutsche Zeitung of Munich (9/21):

"Sometimes you just have to use your imagination to understand reality. What would have happened if the German citizen Khaled el-Masri were named Walter Meier and was kidnapped by the Belgium intelligence service? The German justice cavalry would be all over the place.... It is known that prosecutors take rigorous actions when there is no resistance. Prosecutors are not different from politicians in this respect. However, some suspects are more equal than others. The most equal in the empire of intelligence services is the CIA, which can take any liberties in Germany it wants. The experience in the case of el-Masri is not new."

D. (Mideast) Lebanon Mission

1. Sabine Adler commented in national radio station DeutschlandRadio of Berlin (9/20):

"The decision was historic because it opened a new chapter in the German-Israeli relationship. Germany won back confidence because it came to terms with its history over the recent decades, and because Germans are now democrats who are not neutral but are obliged to uphold the values of peace and human rights, not as observer but

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with weapons in their hands.... Germany should use its credibility, reputation, and power to implement the mission."

2. "Higher Stakes"

Berthold Kohler noted in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (9/21):

"Germany has enough reasons for helping stabilize the ceasefire in southern Lebanon. However, the prospect for the mission, which will last much longer than the one year the mandate allows, is unclear. It is not important that no more weapons will be delivered to Hezbollah; this cannot be completely prevented. The political effect of the mission on the Mideast parties, including the masterminds in Syria and Iran, has now become much more important with the deployment of the European soldiers. Weighing the risks and chances, the mission is justifiable. However, there is no guarantee that it will be successful. Germany is not forced to redefine the conditions under which it would take part in future military interventions. Berlin will have to focus on conflicts that seriously threaten Germany's security. Germany must not believe that its enlarged responsibility means that it now has to militarily engage in crisis regions where the country previously provided only humanitarian aid."

3. "The Chancellor Must Stay Course"

Nikolaus Blome remarked in mass-circulation, right-of-center tabloid Bild-Zeitung of Hamburg (9/21):

"This coalition has two very different faces. In foreign policy matters, the grand coalition uses its power. In a united and determined fashion, it sends the Bundeswehr on a historic mission to the Middle East. A coalition with a smaller majority would have had

problems achieving this. The picture at home looks very different. In the reform of the health system, the parties simultaneously play the role of the government and the opposition. The result is complete chaos; the SPD and CDU fight against each other, and the CDU and CSU minister presidents are irritating the chancellor. Above all, the health minister plays her tricks on everybody.... Angela Merkel should apply her foreign policy methods to domestic issues. Those who steer a clear course in the world should do the same at home."

4. "Peace Mission"

Matthias Arning opined in left-of-center Frankfurter Rundschau (9/21):

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"Despite all the risks of this military attempt to help pacify and stabilize the region poses, the UN mission offers a unique opportunity to bring freedom to this crisis-ridden region. If sustainable state structures can be established in Lebanon, it could serve as a model for Palestine. This is a chance that must be taken. Before this mission started, the powers of the Mideast Quartet, who see themselves as mediators between the conflicting parties, no longer had any fresh ideas.... Meanwhile, U.S. President Bush continued to pull out the Secretary of State as his trump card. Bush promised at the UN General Assembly that Condoleezza Rice will travel to the Mideast again to remind the people there that the Quartet sketched the path to peace a long time ago with the road map."

5. "The Order"

Stephan-Andreas Casdorff had this to say in centrist Der Tagesspiegel of Berlin (9/21):

"Nobody must be afraid of the operative problems. If your mind is clear, you can give orders. The order is clear: Help create peace! This is significant not least because a grand coalition of the Israeli government, the Israeli peace movement, and involved Arab governments have asked the German government to participate. And in Germany, the Central Council of Jews supported the mission. This trust is an honor as much as an obligation. Those who reject the obligation ignore the historic significance."

E. (Thailand) Military Coup

1. "Weak Institutions"

Peter Sturm editorialized in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (9/21):

"In his own reserved style, the monarch joined the side of PM Thaksin's opponents a few months ago. After his intervention, the parliamentary election, which was boycotted by the opposition, was declared invalid. It is unclear whether, when, and under which circumstances the Thais will be able to vote again. The army did not just oust a government leader. The Administrative Reform Council immediately abolished all state institutions. Another new constitution will be drafted, but it is unclear how this could resolve the permanent institutional crisis of the country."

2. "A Coup Is No Solution"

Kirstin Wenk noted in right-of-center Die Welt of Berlin (9/21):

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"The change of power casts a bad light on the so-called civil society in Bangkok. Also the king played a dubious role. The oldest serving monarch earned his merits when he stopped the military in favor of democratic forces in 1973 and 1992. He now chose the side of the opponents, although the 79-year old political expert must know that an authoritarian solution cannot be a model

for the future. Who will say what is right or wrong when King Bhumibol is dead? There is no alternative to democracy."

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